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Report of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" on its second session

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council

A. Draft resolution to be recommended by the Council for adoption by the General Assembly

1. The Commission on the Status of Women, acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", recommends to the Economic and Social Council the approval of the following draft resolution for adoption by the General Assembly:

Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"*

The Economic and Social Council,

Recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following resolution:

"*The General Assembly,*

"*Recalling* its resolutions 52/100, 52/231 and 53/120, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/6,

"*Taking note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on review and appraisal[1] and on further actions and initiatives,[2]

"*Taking note with appreciation* of the report[3] of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action[4] by the States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women,[5]

"1. *Reiterates* its invitation to Governments that have not yet done so to prepare national action plans and reports on the implementation of the Platform for Action, and underlines the importance of involving relevant actors of civil society especially non-governmental organizations;

"2. *Invites* Member States, in preparing implementation plans and reports and responding to the questionnaire of the Secretary-General, to report on good practices, positive actions, lessons learned, the use of qualitative and quantitative indicators for measuring progress, wherever possible, key challenges remaining in the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action and obstacles encountered;

"3. *Encourages* all the regional commissions and other intergovernmental regional organizations to carry out activities in support of the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", *inter alia*, through holding

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* For the discussion see chap. II.

[1] E/CN.6/1999/PC/3.

[2] E/CN.6/1999/PC/2.

[3] E/CN.6/1999/PC/4, annex.

[4] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[5] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

preparatory meetings, to ensure a regional perspective on implementation and on further actions and initiatives, as well as on a vision for gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century, and to make their reports available in the year 2000 to the Commission on the Status of Women acting as preparatory committee;

"4. *Encourages* all entities of the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies, funds and programmes and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, to be involved actively in preparatory activities and to participate at the highest level in the special session, including through presentations on best practices, obstacles encountered and a vision for the future to accelerate implementation of the Platform for Action and address new and emerging trends;

"5. *Decides* that the special session shall have a plenary and an ad hoc committee of the whole;

"6. *Reaffirms* that the special session will be undertaken on the basis of and with full respect for the Platform for Action, and that there will be no renegotiation of the existing agreements contained therein;

"7. *Decides* that the provisional agenda shall include the following items:

(a) Review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action;

(b) Further actions and initiatives for overcoming obstacles to implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action;

"8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare, in time for the next session of the Preparatory Committee in the year 2000, comprehensive reports on progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action nationally, regionally and internationally, taking into account all relevant information and inputs available to the United Nations system, on the following:

(a) A review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action based on, *inter alia*, national action plans, reports of the States parties to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women under article 18 of the Convention, replies of Member States to the questionnaire, statements made by delegations at relevant forums of the United Nations, reports of regional commissions and other entities of the United Nations system and follow-up to recent global United Nations conferences;

(b) Good practices, positive actions, lessons learned, examples of the use of any qualitative and quantitative indicators for measuring progress, successful strategies and promising initiatives for the implementation of the Platform for Action;

(c) Obstacles encountered and strategies for overcoming them;

(d) Further actions and initiatives, within the overall goals of gender equality, development and peace, to accelerate implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action beyond the year 2000, recognizing the need for analytical tools and strategies for implementation, taking into account inputs, as well as comments of Member States to the Secretary-General's report on further actions and initiatives; and in this regard invites Member States to provide inputs and comments thereon;

"9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make available all necessary documentation in a timely manner for the special session, keeping in mind General Assembly resolutions 52/231 and 53/120;

"10. *Encourages* the United Nations system to continue to hold discussions with relevant actors of civil society, especially non-governmental organizations, in the exchange of views for the review and appraisal process on the implementation of the Platform for Action, including, wherever available, the use of electronic networking;

"11. *Urges* Member States and observers to ensure their representation at the special session at a high political level;

"12. *Confirms* that the special session will be open to the participation of all States Members of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies and observers, in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly;[6]

"13. *Calls for* the participation of associate members of regional economic commissions in the special session, subject to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and in the preparatory process thereof, in the same capacity of observer that held for their participation in the Fourth World Conference on Women;

"14. *Encourages* Member States to include relevant actors of civil society, especially non-governmental organizations and representatives of women's organizations, in their national preparatory processes as well as in their delegations to the Preparatory Committee and the special session;

"15. *Emphasizes* the important role of non-governmental organizations in implementing the Platform for Action and the need for their active involvement in the preparations for the special session, as well as the need to ensure appropriate arrangements for their contributions to the special session;

"16. *Decides* that non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, as well as the non-governmental organizations that were accredited to the Fourth World Conference on Women, may participate in the special session without creating a precedent for future sessions of the General Assembly;[6]

"17. *Decides* to defer consideration of all the modalities for participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session until the next session of the Preparatory Committee;

"18. *Invites* the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as preparatory committee to convene informal open-ended consultations, as appropriate, to consider preparations for the special session;

"19. *Recommends* that the major share of the three-week forty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2000 be allocated to the Commission acting as preparatory committee."

B. Draft decision for adoption by the Council

2. The Commission on the Status of Women, acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality,

[6] See Assembly resolution 52/100, para. 46.

development and peace for the twenty-first century", recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" on its second session and provisional agenda and documentation for the third session of the Preparatory Committee

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) *Takes note* of the report of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" on its second session;

(b) *Approves* the provisional agenda and documentation for the third session of the Preparatory Committee set out below.

Provisional agenda and documentation for the third session of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

2. Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action on the basis of national reports, taking into account the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/6, sect. III, para. 5 (f))

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996–2001

Comparative report of the Secretary-General on how different categories of projects and programmes of United Nations organizations are including women's interests and gender mainstreaming issues and on resources allocated in this regard (General Assembly resolution 52/231, para. 14)

Report on emerging issues containing additional material on further actions and initiatives for the preparation of the outlook beyond the year 2000 (General Assembly resolution 52/231, para. 11)

3. Adoption of the report of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly.

Chapter II

Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

1. The Preparatory Committee considered item 2 of its agenda from its 2nd to 5th meetings, on 15, 16, 18 and 19 March 1999.[7] It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on a framework for further actions and initiatives that might be considered during the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (E/CN.6/1999/PC/2);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on initiation of the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (E/CN.6/1999/PC/3);

(c) Note by the Secretariat on progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action based on the review of reports to the Commission on the Status of Women of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (E/CN.6/1999/PC/4).

2. At its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 15 and 16 March, the Preparatory Committee held a panel discussion and dialogue under item 2.

3. At its 2nd meeting, the Preparatory Committee heard presentations by the following panel of experts: Patricia Licuanan, President of Miriam College and Professor of Psychology, Ateneo de Manila University; Mihaly Simai, Research Professor, Institute for World Economics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences; Asthma Jahangir, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; and Hassan Keynan, researcher, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research.

4. At its 3rd meeting, the Preparatory Committee heard presentations by the following panel of experts: Laura Balbo, Minister for Equal Opportunities, Italy; Magalys Arocha Domínguez, National Secretariat, Federation of Cuban Women Responsible for International Affairs; Diane Elson, Special Adviser to the Executive Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women; and Nirmaladevi Nababsing, Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development, Mauritius.

5. At its 4th meeting, on 18 March, the Preparatory Committee heard statements by the observers for the following non-governmental organizations: International Women Count Network; World Blind Union (also on behalf of Disabled People's International); Indigenous Women's caucus; South-North Women of Colour caucus; African non-governmental organization caucus.

6. At its 5th meeting, on 19 March, the Preparatory Committee agreed to include in its report the following summary of the general debate held by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session on agenda item 4 of that session, which related to agenda item 2 of the Preparatory Committee:

[7] See also *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 7* (E/1999/27), chaps. II and III.

Summary of the general debate by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session on agenda item 4, "Initiation of the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action and preparation for the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000"

1. During the general debate, 21 member States as well as Guyana, on behalf of the Group of 77, and Germany, on behalf of the European Union and Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus and Liechtenstein, addressed agenda item 4, making suggestions related to the special session of the General Assembly to review progress in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Beijing Platform for Action.

2. Delegations affirmed their commitment to taking an active part in the preparations for the special session. It was emphasized that the purpose of the special session was not to renegotiate the results of the Fourth World Conference on Women but to chart an informed, action-oriented plan for advancing the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action. One delegation expressed the view that no new issues or concepts should be introduced that might reopen what had been decided at Beijing. Some delegations suggested that cross-cutting themes should be identified. One delegation noted that the cross-cutting themes proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on further actions and initiatives (E/CN.6/1999/PC/2) deserved attention. Two delegations proposed that the review focus on empowerment of women and mainstreaming of a gender perspective at all levels as the framework for the special session. It had been noted, with respect to the routine empowerment of women in political, economic, social and other fields, that this made strong societies in times of peace and mitigated automatic gender abuse in times of civil disruption.

3. It was proposed that the special session review progress made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of all 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action in a comprehensive and holistic manner in order to accelerate implementation. Assessments should identify good practices and lessons learned during implementation, as well as obstacles encountered and addressed. The special session should also identify effective strategies for overcoming obstacles to implementation, as well as further action and initiatives required for implementation. It was suggested that strategies to promote measurable implementation might be grouped into three categories:

(a) Translating political will into action through innovative approaches and allocation of resources;

(b) Building institutional capacity for the empowerment of women, gender equality and gender inclusiveness at the individual and institutional levels;

(c) Engaging civil society and building partnerships among all groups of the population, including partnership and mutual respect between men and women.

4. It was also stressed that where there is poverty and scarcity of resources and where information and communication technology is backward, women feel the brunt of the shortfall. Strategies to promote even levels of development between countries by minimizing the widening gap between rich and poor nations and between rich and poor people were important. Disparities between developed and developing countries should not, however, be a factor inhibiting their collaboration and cooperation in achieving the goals of gender equality.

5. One delegation stated that the five cross-cutting functional areas emphasized in the report of the Secretary-General on further actions and initiatives, namely, political will, capacity-building, accountability and monitoring, cooperation and partnership, and assistance to women and girls currently subject to discrimination and disadvantage, provided an appropriate framework for identifying further actions and initiatives to fulfil commitments made at the Beijing Conference. With respect to the fifth area, there was a need to focus on both strategies to prevent gender discrimination and strategies to protect those subject to discrimination.

6. Some delegations proposed that both the review and appraisal and further actions and initiatives regarding the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action should be based on mechanisms for measuring qualitative progress in the implementation of women's enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It was suggested that benchmarks were needed and that a voluntary benchmarking regime, both qualitative and quantitative, should be developed as a baseline against which progress could be measured. Such a regime could then serve as a tool for the Commission's work during the period 2001–2005.

7. It was stressed that the review should be based on all available sources of information. Several delegations emphasized the importance for the five-year review of the agreed conclusions and resolutions adopted since 1995 by the Commission on the Status of Women on the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. Others suggested drawing on national action plans, responses to the Secretary-General's questionnaire, relevant thematic reports, and reports of States Parties submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. One delegation proposed that consultations be organized inter-sessionally to ensure effective preparations for the special session.

8. A number of delegations stressed the need for active participation of civil society and involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the preparations for the special session, as well as the need to ensure appropriate arrangements for their contributions to the special session. Active dialogue between NGOs and Governments was also advocated, both at the national and international levels, and it was suggested that Governments include NGOs in their official delegations to the special session. It was pointed out, however, that the primary responsibility for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action rested with Governments, and that political will and commitment at the national and international levels played a critical role in creating the enabling environment necessary for equal treatment and gender mainstreaming.

9. Several delegations emphasized that the outcome of the special session should not be an "academic" exercise. It should be concrete, action-oriented and operational. Several delegations proposed the adoption of a short political declaration to reaffirm the commitments made at Beijing. Strategies to overcome the obstacles encountered in implementation and to identify further actions and initiatives needed for the twenty-first century should be formulated in a short and concise manner and should be attached to the declaration. Some delegations expressed the view that the special session would be an opportunity to look at the future role of the Commission on the Status of Women, including its new long-term programme of work and its working methods.

10. During the discussion, a number of specific issues were identified as constituting challenges for the future or as constituting new developments since 1995. Concern was expressed that progress in implementing the Platform was being hindered by economic and political developments, both globally and nationally. The creation

and/or sustaining of an environment conducive to gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all was identified as an emerging challenge. This included globalization and modernization in its many aspects. Many delegates called for re-examining globalization beyond its economic dimensions in order to understand it as a diverse phenomenon that influenced many aspects of women's lives and that might leave women and girls increasingly vulnerable as a result of cutbacks in social services and in the role of the State. Another challenge identified was the implications for women of the ageing of the population. Many endorsed a life-cycle approach to policy and programming. A number of delegations considered the question of partnership between men and women to be a challenge that needed to be addressed, and called for strategies to promote gender relations based on equality, mutual respect and sharing of responsibilities.

11. The need for a strategy to confront various forms of religious fundamentalism that might affect women's enjoyment of their human rights was noted. The importance of a concerted effort to identify obstacles and take action to promote women's leadership role in politics and in all other spheres was also noted. One delegation drew attention to new scientific developments in methods of medically assisted procreation that raised possible questions of protection from potential abuses in the fields of genetic science and research, and had implications for human rights in general and women's rights in particular. Others noted that broader access by women to science and new technologies, including the related employment implications, was an issue to be addressed.

12. Delegates also provided information during the debate on priorities for action to implement the Platform identified at the country level and on policies and programmes put in place to address those priorities. In most cases, the priorities were reflected in their national action plans to implement the Beijing Platform for Action. That information would be valuable as an input into the review and appraisal, which would be presented to the Commission in 2000. A number of delegates addressed the critical areas of women and health and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. That aspect of the general debate would be reflected in the summaries on those two critical areas since those critical areas had been addressed in detail during the current session.

Action taken by the Commission acting as Preparatory Committee

7. At its 5th meeting, on 19 March, the Preparatory Committee had before it the text of a draft resolution entitled "Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century'" (E/CN.6/1999/PC/L.2), submitted by the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee. The Preparatory Committee also had before it an informal text containing revisions to the draft resolution.

8. The Preparatory Committee was advised that the draft resolution, as revised, contained no programme budget implications.

9. At the same meeting, following statements by the representatives of Algeria, Kenya, Nigeria, Turkey, Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica and China, the Preparatory Committee recommended the adoption of the draft resolution, as revised, by the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (see chap. I, section A).

Chapter III

Provisional agenda for the third session of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly

1. The Preparatory Committee considered item 3 of its agenda at its 5th meeting, on 19 March 1999. It had before it a note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional agenda and documentation for its third session (E/CN.6/1999/PC/L.3).

2. At the same meeting, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women made a statement.

3. The Preparatory Committee then recommended to the Economic and Social Council the approval of the provisional agenda and documentation for its third session (see chap. I, sect. B).

Chapter IV

Adoption of the report of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly

At its 5th meeting, on 19 March 1999, following statements by the representative of Algeria and the Secretary, the Preparatory Committee adopted its draft report, as contained in document E/CN.6/1999/PC/L.1, and entrusted the Bureau with its completion.

Chapter V

Organizational matters

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Preparatory Committee held its second session at United Nations Headquarters from 15 to 19 March 1999. The Preparatory Committee held 5 meetings (1st to 5th) and a number of informal meetings.

2. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, Patricia Flor (Germany), who also made a statement.

3. At the 1st meeting, on 15 March, the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee made a statement. At the same meeting, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women made an introductory statement.

B. Attendance

4. As decided by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/100, the deliberations of the Commission acting as preparatory committee were open to the participation of all States Members of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies and observers, in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly.

5. The following States were represented: Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

6. Palestine, an entity maintaining a permanent observer mission to the United Nations, was also represented.

7. The following United Nations bodies were represented: Economic Commission for Africa and Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

8. The following specialized agencies were represented: International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

9. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, Council of Europe, European Community,

International Organization for Migration, Organization of American States and Organization of the Islamic Conference.

10. In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1998/301, non-governmental organizations that either are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or had been accredited to the Fourth World Conference on Women also attended the session.

C. Officers

11. At its 1st meeting, on 15 March 1999, the Preparatory Committee elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairperson:	Irma Engelbrecht (South Africa)
Vice-Chairpersons:	Patricia Flor (Germany) Christine Kapalata (United Republic of Tanzania) Sonia R. Leonce-Carryl (Saint Lucia) Mónica Martínez (Ecuador) Kirsten Mlačak (Canada) Rasa Ostrauskaitė (Lithuania) Dubravka Šimonović (Croatia)

12. The Preparatory Committee postponed the election of two additional Vice-Chairpersons to its next session. At its 5th meeting, on 19 March, the Preparatory Committee approved the attendance at its Bureau meetings of two members to be designated by the Asian group of States, pending election of the two additional members to the Bureau.

D. Agenda and organization of work

13. At its 1st meeting, on 15 March, the Preparatory Committee adopted its provisional agenda and approved its proposed organization of work as contained in document E/CN.6/1999/PC/1. The agenda was as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".
3. Provisional agenda for the third session of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly.
4. Adoption of the report of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly.

E. Documentation

14. The Commission acting as preparatory committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Provisional agenda (E/CN.6/1999/PC/1);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on a framework for further actions and initiatives that might be considered during the special session of the General Assembly entitled

"Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (E/CN.6/1999/PC/2);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on initiation of the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (E/CN.6/1999/PC/3);

(d) Note by the Secretariat on progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action based on the review of reports to the Commission on the Status of Women of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (E/CN.6/1999/PC/4);

(e) Draft report (E/CN.6/1999/PC/L.1);

(f) Draft resolution submitted by the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee, entitled "Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century'" (E/CN.6/1999/PC/L.2);

(g) Draft provisional agenda and documentation for the third session of the Commission acting as preparatory committee (E/CN.6/1999/PC/L.3);

(h) Note by the Secretariat containing a summary of the general debate by the Commission on the Status of Women on agenda item 4 (E/CN.6/1999/PC/CRP.1).

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Social and human rights questions: implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination

Social and human rights questions: implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination

Report of the Secretary-General

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Introduction

1. By its resolution 48/91 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly proclaimed the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1993–2003), and adopted the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

2. In its resolution 49/146 of 23 December 1994, the General Assembly adopted the revised Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and requested the Secretary-General to submit each year to the Economic and Social Council a detailed report on all activities of the United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies undertaken to combat racism and racial discrimination, containing an analysis of information received on such activities.

3. The present report has been prepared in response to the request of the General Assembly in pursuance of Assembly resolutions 52/111 of 12 December 1997 and 53/132 of 9 December 1998. It contains information on the forthcoming World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to be held not later than the year 2001, as well as information received by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the activities undertaken or envisaged by Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations within the framework of the Third Decade.

4. As of 30 January 1999, replies had been received from the Governments of Cuba, Finland, France, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Peru, Turkey and the United States of America. Substantive replies were also received from the following United Nations bodies: the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Contributions were also received from the following non-governmental organizations: Anti-Racism Information Service, Caucasians United for Reparations and Emancipation, Dominican Union of Journalists for Peace, International Human Rights Association of American Minorities, International League for Human Rights, North-South XXI and Oxfam. These replies are included in the second part of the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Commission on Human Rights submitted pursuant to Commission resolution 1998/26 of 17 April 1998[1] (see document E/CN.4/1999/12, part two). The present report includes replies received after that date from the Government of Lebanon; specialized agencies of the United Nations system: the International Labour Organization (ILO) (International Labour Office) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and non-governmental organizations: International Human Rights Watch and Minority Right Group.

I. Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination within the United Nations system

A. Commission on Human Rights

5. At its fifty-fifth session, the Commission on Human Rights discussed the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and in its resolution 1999/78 of 28 April 1999 on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, section II, regretted the continued lack of interest, support and financial resources for the Third Decade and the Programme of Action, and that very few of the activities planned for the period 1994–1998 had been carried out.

6. In the same resolution, the Commission on Human Rights recommended that the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, should request the Secretary-General to assign high priority to the activities of the Programme of Action and to earmark adequate resources to finance its activities.

7. The Commission on Human Rights also welcomed the establishment of the racism project team in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with a view to coordinating all activities of the Third Decade.

World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

8. In its resolution 1998/26 of 17 April 1998,[2] the Commission on Human Rights decided to create an open-ended working group to meet during the fifty-fifth session in order to review and formulate proposals for consideration by the Commission and possible forwarding to the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference at its first session in the year 2000. The working group met from 24 to 26 March 1999. Representatives of Governments, specialized agencies, regional bodies and non-governmental organizations participated in its work.

9. The working group debated on the seven objectives of the World Conference as set forth in General Assembly resolution 52/111 and took as a starting point a document presented by the African Group. The main contribution of the working group was the submission of a report (see document E/CN.4/1999/16) to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fifth session, which contains recommendations on the preparation for the World Conference and proposals concerning the function and composition of the Bureau for the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference.

10. At its fifty-fifth session, the Commission on Human Rights discussed the convening of the World Conference; and in its resolution 1999/78, the Commission recommended to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, that, if no offer was made to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for hosting the World Conference by the end of the first session of the Preparatory Committee to be held in the year 2000, the World Conference should be held in Geneva in the year 2001.

11. In resolution 1999/78, the Commission on Human Rights also invited United Nations bodies and mechanisms dealing with the question of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Special Rapporteur concerned to participate actively in the preparatory process with a view to ensuring the success of the World Conference and to coordinate their activities in that regard with the assistance of the High Commissioner.

12. In the same resolution, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General, the United Nations specialized agencies and the regional commissions to provide financial and technical assistance for the organization of the regional preparatory meetings planned in the context of the World Conference and stressed that such assistance should be supplemented by voluntary contributions.

13. Also in resolution 1999/78, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to undertake a study on ways of making United Nations activities and mechanisms in the context of programmes aimed at combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance more effective.

14. Additionally, in the same resolution, the Commission on Human Rights requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights:

(a) To set up a voluntary fund designed to cover all aspects of the preparatory process for the World Conference and the participation of non-governmental organizations, especially from developing countries, and requested all Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and private individuals to contribute to that Fund;

(b) To prepare questionnaires in order to review progress made in the fight against racism and to reappraise the obstacles to further progress, and to send them to States, specialized agencies, international governmental and non-governmental organizations and national institutions; and to analyse the replies and submit her conclusions to the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference;

(c) To undertake a study to be submitted to the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on ways of improving coordination between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and all specialized agencies and international, regional and subregional organizations in the field of action to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

(d) To carry out a world information campaign on the objectives of the World Conference;

(e) To organize an international seminar of experts on the remedies available to the victims of acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and on good national practices in that field;

(f) To open an Internet site on the preparations for the World Conference in close cooperation with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat;

(g) To send all Governments, international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and national institutions information handbooks and pamphlets in order to increase the public awareness of the problem that racism constitutes;

(h) To appoint renowned ambassadors from the entertainment, arts, culture, sports and musical worlds who might mobilize the attention of civil society;

(i) To invite the sports world to cooperate actively as a partner in the World Conference;

(j) To undertake appropriate consultations with non-governmental organizations on the possibility that they might hold a forum before and during the World Conference and to provide them with technical assistance for that purpose;

(k) To help States and regional organizations to convene national and regional meetings or to undertake other initiatives, to prepare for the World Conference;

(l) To help the Special Rapporteur on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance of the Commission on Human Rights to carry out a study on preventive measures relating to ethnic, racial, religious and xenophobically motivated conflicts;

(m) To invite the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance of the Commission on Human Rights to participate actively in the preparatory process and in the World Conference by initiating studies on action to combat incitement to hatred and religious intolerance.

B. Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

15. At its fiftieth session, held from 3 to 28 August 1998, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted resolution 1998/6 of 20 August 1998 (see document E/CN.4/1999/4-E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/45), in which it welcomed General Assembly resolution 52/111 of 12 December 1997 in which the Assembly had decided to convene a World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to be held not later than the year 2001.

16. In the same resolution, the Subcommission decided to carry out further studies without delay, within the framework of the objectives laid down in General Assembly resolution 52/111, and to transmit recommendations for studies to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fifth session and, through the Commission, to the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference; recommended to the Preparatory Committee that the World Conference devote considerable attention to the overall themes of equality and diversity in an effort to combat racism and racial discrimination; and suggested that the World Conference focus, *inter alia*, on both situations of ethnic conflict and other patterns of discrimination which were based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin, as well as the topics of ethnic conflict, education and racial discrimination, globalization in the context of the increase in incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, affirmative action, migrant workers, the rights of non-citizens, reservations to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,[3] hate speech and remedies for racial discrimination.

C. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

17. At its fifty-third session, held from 3 to 21 August 1998, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination adopted decision 9 (53) of 21 August 1998,[4] which contains preliminary ideas for the agenda of the World Conference. In the same document, the Committee also reiterated its readiness to participate actively in the entire preparatory process for the World Conference and in the Conference itself and indicated that it had commenced considering suggestions for the agenda of the World Conference and ideas the World Conference might take into consideration in any declaration and programme of action that it might decide to adopt.

18. Also in decision 9 (53), the Committee was of the view that the agenda could include the following topics: current realities in the aftermath of slavery and colonialism; impact of economic globalization and racial equality; treatment of migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons; prevention of racial discrimination, including early warning and urgent procedures; prevention of racial discrimination through education; remedies, redress mechanisms and reparations for racial discrimination; international mechanisms for the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and their progressive development; combating hate speech and promoting tolerance in the digital age; the implications of multiple identities (race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, gender).

19. Pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/26 of 17 April 1998, the Committee submitted to the sessional open-ended Working Group to review and formulate proposals for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance of the Commission, the following six studies prepared by members of the Committee:

(a) "The causes of, and remedies for, racial discrimination", by Mr. M. Banton (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.6);

(b) "United Nations strategies to combat racism and racial discrimination", by Mr. T. van Boven (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.7);

(c) "Zimbabwe and South Africa: the lessons we can learn", by Mrs. S. Sadiq Ali (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.8);

(d) "Preventing genocide", by Mr. A. Shahi, Mr. L. Valencia Rodriguez and Mr. I. Garvalov (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.9);

(e) "The definitions of racial discrimination", by Mr. I. Diaconu (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.10);

(f) "De l'utilité de l'application complémentaire des procédures de plaintes individuelles devant les organes universels et régionaux de protection des droits de l'homme; un exemple : les plaintes individuelles devant le Comité pour l'élimination de la discrimination raciale et devant la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme" [Usefulness of the complementary application of the procedures for individual complaints before the universal and regional bodies for protection of human rights; for example, the individual complaints before the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the European Court of Human Rights], by Mr. R. de Gouttes (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.11).

D. Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights

20. Mr. Maurice Glélé-Ahanhanzo, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in his annual report to the Commission on Human Rights (see E/CN.4/1999/15 and Add.1) called attention to measures taken by Governments to meet the objectives of the mandate and reviewed manifestations of racism and racial discrimination in 1998.

21. The Special Rapporteur also reported on a mission carried out with respect to South Africa in response to allegations concerning a rise in xenophobia and mistreatment of migrants in that country. He also examined the progress of post-apartheid reforms and the obstacles confronting the rapid transformation of South African society into one that was democratic and non-racist. He met representatives of government, the Constitutional Court, the Human Rights Commission, municipal councils, academic institutions and various non-governmental organizations.

E. International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

22. The commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was organized on 19 March 1999 at the United Nations Office at Geneva by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in cooperation with the United Nations Information Service. The theme chosen for this year's round-table discussion was entitled "Towards the World Conference Against Racism".

23. The round-table discussion was chaired by Mr. Bertie Ramcharan, Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The members of the panel were Mr. Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr, Chairman of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; Mr. Ivan Garvalov, Chairman of the Contact Group for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; and Mrs. Edith Ballantyne, Secretary of the Non-Governmental Organizations Subcommittee on Racism and Racial Discrimination. The round table was attended by representatives of the diplomatic community, as well as of non-governmental organizations.

F. Activities undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

1. Background papers for the open-ended Working Group to review and formulate proposals for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

24. In order to assist the sessional open-ended Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights at its meeting, held from 24 to 26 March 1999, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had prepared the following background papers:

(a) "The declarations and programmes of action adopted by the two preceding World Conferences to combat racism" (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.1);

(b) "Selection of conclusions and recommendations of seminars and studies on racism and racial discrimination" (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.2);

(c) "Decision 9 (53) of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination concerning the World Conference" (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.3);

(d) "Selection of recommendations of Mr. M. Glélé-Ahanhanzo, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.4);

(e) "Relevant recommendations and decisions of the Subcommission" (E/CN.4/1999/WG.1/BP.5).

2. Preliminary analytical study on the objectives of the World Conference and compendium of references to publications and other works on racism

25. Pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/26 of 17 April 1998, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session a preliminary analytical study on the objectives of the World Conference as identified in General Assembly resolution 52/111 as well as a compendium of references to publications and other works on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (see document E/CN.4/1999/12, annex). The final study will be submitted to the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference due to meet a week after the forthcoming fifty-sixth session of the Commission.

3. Questionnaire to review progress made in the fight against racism

26. Pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1999/78, paragraph 49 (a), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights prepared a questionnaire for States, specialized agencies, international governmental and non-governmental organizations and national institutions to review progress made in the fight against racism, and to reappraise the obstacles to further progress in the field and ways to overcome them. A report containing an analysis of the replies will be submitted to the Preparatory Committee at its first session in the year 2000.

4. Study on the economic factors contributing to the perpetuation of racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination

27. In its resolution 49/146, the General Assembly approved the revised Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, to be implemented between 1993 and 2003. In the context of the Programme of Action, the Secretary-General was requested to undertake a study on economic factors contributing to the perpetuation of racism and racial discrimination.

28. The study, which is being finalized for submission to the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference to be held in the year 2000, will identify practices that lead to economic deprivation or exclusion of ethnic, racial, national and linguistic minorities as well as indigenous populations and migrants. Furthermore, it will make recommendations to Governments, including in respect of affirmative action or other action-oriented strategies, aiming at remedying the situations addressed.

G. Information received from United Nations programmes and specialized agencies

1. International Labour Organization (ILO)

29. During the past year, the International Labour Office of the International Labour Organization (ILO) continued its work for the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation on a number of grounds, including those of race and colour, based on the ILO Constitution as well as on Convention No. 111 (Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation).[5]

30. The ratification and application of Convention No. 111 — it being considered one of the seven fundamental Conventions of the Organization — have been among the targets of the ratification campaign instituted by the Director-General of ILO in 1995. As a result of the campaign, Convention No. 111 has now been ratified by 131 countries, and more ratifications are expected shortly. ILO has continued its supervisory activities related to this Convention and all the others for which it is responsible. A number of reports from ratifying countries were examined by the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations in 1998. Comments thereon are contained in the Committee's annual report published in March 1999.

31. The International Labour Office also provided technical assistance and advisory services to member States wishing to ratify Convention No. 111 or to apply it more fully. It has, for instance, provided advice during the last year, in the form of national seminars, to Brazil, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and South Africa, and it will do so in China and other countries. A technical cooperation project to establish an affirmative action policy and implementing mechanism has been almost completed in Namibia.

32. ILO has a considerable programme of activities in regard to migrant workers, and has taken part in the deliberations within the United Nations on this subject. The ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has just concluded a general survey under article 19 of its Constitution on migrant workers (published in early March 1999).

33. With regard to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, ILO looks forward to working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare

for this conference. Its objectives are directly in line with those of ILO, and ILO's activities in this area are complementary to those of the United Nations.

2. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

34. Since 1950, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has undertaken a number of studies designed to expose the unscientific foundations of racism and to show its close link to the social and economic context of the society in which it exists. The Statement on Race (July 1950),[6] followed by the Statement on the Nature of Race and Race Differences (June 1951),[7] both of which were based on the latest findings of scientific research at the time, rejected the idea that there were fundamental differences due to race in the human species and unequivocally condemned the theories based on the superiority of one or more races. Those two statements were chiefly concerned with the biological and anthropological aspects of the problem.

35. In 1978, the General Conference of UNESCO, at its twentieth session, adopted the Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice,[8] which condemns all theories that postulate inequalities in the endowment or calling of different peoples. The Declaration seeks to refute racist ideas and to combat the socio-economic inequalities underlying and reinforcing them. Since the adoption of the Declaration, the Director-General has submitted reports to the General Conference, and has requested the States parties to provide him with information on the measures that they have taken to implement the principles contained in the Declaration.

36. The "Slave Route" programme is one of UNESCO's most recent international projects for the elimination of racism and racial discrimination. Launched in 1994, it aims to study the deep-rooted causes and methods of the slave trade together with the cultural consequences and interactions that it has unleashed in and among the continents and regions concerned. The project's primary emphasis is the essential requirement of historical truth and the duty to remember. The three major objectives of the Slave Route project are: a historical study of the causes of the transatlantic slave trade, the clarification of consequences and interactions to which it gave rise, and the contribution of the project to the establishment of a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence between races and peoples.

37. Among the different activities UNESCO has undertaken to implement the Slave Route programme is a detailed plan to prepare teaching material which has been drawn up by UNESCO's education sector with the financial assistance of the Norwegian aid agency and the coordination unit of the Associated Schools Project. The plan has already mobilized a network of 4,250 schools in 137 countries. UNESCO attaches great importance to the visibility of that project which has already been widely reported on in the press and the audio-visual media.

38. A joint cultural tourism programme on the Slave Route has been carried out, in close cooperation with the World Tourism Organization, the African culture and tourism ministries and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The programme aims to help the countries involved to identify, restore and promote all the places, buildings and physical symbols of the transatlantic slave trade.

39. Other events and meetings have already taken place in Haiti, in Guadeloupe and in Cuba on cultural interaction, national identity and society. Conferences on the African diaspora are planned for Brazil, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. UNESCO is also setting up a number of slavery museums to encourage remembrance in countries that have asked for them.

II. Information received from Governments

Lebanon

40. The Government of Lebanon in its reply stated that: "The Government of the Lebanese Republic considers it important to provide the necessary resources to States requiring assistance for the implementation of their programmes to combat racial discrimination."

41. "With regard to the World Conference, the Government views the idea of establishing national machinery to prepare the Conference, as was the case for the Fourth World Conference on Women, as having merit, given the recommendations and proposals which such machinery may submit to the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference. The World Conference itself should hold an in-depth and measured debate on ways of improving women's opportunities for access to education and women's participation in all facets of political, economic and social life."

III. Information received from non-governmental organizations

A. International Human Rights Watch

42. Concerning the forthcoming World Conference, International Human Rights Watch is of the view that the message of the World Conference should be a positive one about the benefits of diversity and equality in the national and international community. Governments should be encouraged to present their "best practices" at the conference with respect to implementing the obligations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the discussion could be organized around specific models of governmental programmes to prevent and remedy racist practices.

43. The Conference should consider themes such as discrimination and exclusion in multiracial societies where race is largely defined by skin colour; ethnic divisions in countries experiencing conflicts similar to those in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, or Rwanda; the implications of economic globalization on the achievement of racial equality worldwide; and the special burdens of people with multiple identities such as relate to race and gender that compound discrimination, preventive measures and effective remedies.

B. Minority Right Group

44. Minority Right Group welcomes the opportunity to enhance its cooperation with "experts" and other non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process of the World Conference and suggests the following issues to be considered in the Conference agenda: globalization, racism and discrimination against minorities; transnational corporations; ethnic conflict (ethnicity as fuel for conflict, role of the media and conflicts); racism and citizenship; de facto segregation; gender issues of racial discrimination; religion; preventive measures; role of education; affirmative action; remedies and redress mechanisms; and identity and emotional barriers.

IV. Status of the Trust Fund for the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination

45. In paragraph 27 of its resolution 52/111, the General Assembly strongly appealed to all Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals in a position to do so to contribute generously to the Trust Fund for the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and, to that end, requested the Secretary-General to continue to undertake appropriate contacts and initiatives to encourage contributions.

46. In paragraph 16 of its resolution 1999/78, the Commission on Human Rights recognized the laudable and generous efforts by donors that had made contributions to the Trust Fund, but felt that those financial contributions had proved inadequate and that the General Assembly should consider all ways and means of financing the Programme of Action, including through the United Nations regular budget.

47. The contributions made by the international community to the Trust Fund have remained below the levels hoped for. In the light of the resources available, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will strive to the utmost to ensure that the forthcoming activities are carried out. Contributions received from 1985 to May 1999 are reflected in the annex to the present report.

V. Conclusions

48. The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance will be a unique and important opportunity to create a new world vision for the fight against racism in the twenty-first century. The contributions made by the various United Nations bodies and organizations, Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to the work of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination continue to reflect global and concerted efforts to address the issues and provide long-lasting solutions.

49. The communications received by the Secretary-General and the deliberations of the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fifth session and during the meetings of its open-ended Working Group bear witness to the strong support for the holding of the World Conference. States

Members of the United Nations, as well as non-governmental and other organizations, appear to have already mobilized themselves to provide an impetus to the fight against racism and racial discrimination.

50. However, few of the activities planned for the period 1994–1998 could be carried out owing to lack of funds. A successful and productive World Conference will require necessary funding and other resources to carry out preparatory activities at the international, regional and national levels, and to cover the costs for the conference itself.

51. In its resolution 1999/78, the Commission on Human Rights called upon all Governments, United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations, as well as interested non-governmental organizations, to contribute fully to the effective implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A, resolution 1998/26.

[2] Ibid., sect. VI, para. 44.

[3] General Assembly resolution 2106 A (XX), annex.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 18* (A/53/18), chap. VIII, decision 9 (53).

[5] ILO, *International Labour Conventions and Recommendations, 1977–1995*, vol. I (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1996), chap. I, Convention No. 111.

[6] Booklet entitled *Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice* (Paris, UNESCO, 1979), chap. I.

[7] Ibid., chap. II.

[8] Ibid.

Annex

Trust Fund for the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination

I. Contributions received from 1985 to May 1999

Country	*Amount (US$)*	*Paid in*
Algeria	5 000.00	1999
Austria	1 000.00	1986
	5 000.00	1992
Bahamas	500.00	1987
	500.00	1988
Bangladesh	1 000.00	1987
	448.85	1992
Belgium	1 500.00	1985
Cameroon	2 711.00	1986
	906.00	1989
Canada	2 000.00	1986
China	10 000.00	1987
Cyprus	1 000.00	1998
Denmark	8 000.00	1985
	*205 303.00	1999
Dominica	1 993.00	1992
	2 002.00	1993
Finland	5 000.00	1985
	*29 429.00	1999
Germany	4 000.00	1985
India	10 000.00	1987
Indonesia	2 500.00	1989
Italy	4 000.00	1986
	10 000.00	1988
Jamaica	500.00	1989
Japan	10 000.00	1986
	10 000.00	1987
	10 000.00	1988
	10 000.00	1989
	10 000.00	1990
	10 000.00	1991
	10 000.00	1992
	10 000.00	1993
	10 000.00	1995
	10 000.00	1996
	10 000.00	1997
	10 000.00	1998
	7 500.00	1999

Country	*Amount (US$)*	*Paid in*
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	10 000.00	1989
	6 000.00	1993
Luxembourg	5 934.00	1991
Malaysia	500.00	1992
Netherlands	5 000.00	1986
Nigeria	2 000.00	1994
Norway	10 000.00	1985
	10 000.00	1986
	73 332.00	1994
	78 762.00	1995
Republic of Korea	3 000.00	1989
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1 000.00	1992
Spain	1 000.00	1985
Swaziland	760.00	1989
Sweden	5 000.00	1985
	7 997.00	1995
Syrian Arab Republic	1 000.00	1987
Thailand	1 000.00	1992
Tunisia	2 000.00	1990
	2 000.00	1993
Turkey	5 000.00	1998
	10 000.00	1999
Total	**455 274.85**	

Note: Asterisk (*) denotes contribution earmarked for World Conference.

Year	*Total amount contributed (US$)*
1985	34 500.00
1986	34 711.00
1987	37 500.00
1988	20 500.00
1989	27 666.00
1990	12 000.00
1991	15 934.00
1992	24 441.85
1993	20 002.00
1994	75 332.00
1995	96 759.00
1996	10 000.00
1997	10 000.00
1998	16 000.00

Non-governmental organizations and individuals	*Amount (US$)*	*Paid in*
Saffron Walden and District Branch United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	254.24	1998

II. Contributions pledged

Country	*Amount (US$)*	*Pledged in*
Cuba	*1 000.00	1999

Note: Asterisk (*) denotes contribution earmarked for World Conference.

III. Contributions available for 1999

(As at March 1999)

Country	*Amount (US$)*	*Pledged in*
Algeria	5 000.00	March 1999
Cyprus	1 000.00	May 1998
*Denmark	205 303.00	January 1999
*Finland	29 429.00	January 1999
Japan	10 000.00	March 1998
	7 500.00	February 1999
Turkey	5 000.00	February 1998
	10 000.00	April 1999
Total	**273 232.00**	

Note: Asterisk (*) denotes contribution earmarked for World Conference.

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Item 13 of the provisional agenda*
ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS

Letter dated 27 May 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith information from the Russian Federation State Committee on Environmental Protection regarding the negative effects on the environment of the military aggression by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Economic and Social Council under item 13 of the provisional agenda of its substantive session of 1999.

(Signed) Sergey LAVROV

* E/1999/100 and Add.1.

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ANNEX

Russian Federation State Committee on Environmental Protection: Information note dated 24 May 1999 on the negative effects of the military action against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

The deliberate bombing of environmentally hazardous sites and the ever increasing scale of the destruction of the environment bear witness to the fact that local military operations are being transformed into large-scale environmental warfare.

The military operations will have the most negative impact on the ecological security of European countries. The probability of missiles striking one of the nuclear power stations in Hungary, Romania, Slovenia or Bulgaria cannot be ruled out. People living within 300 to 500 kilometres of these facilities might be affected by radiation. Tens of millions of people would thus become victims of such a "mistake" by NATO forces. The launching of NATO ground operations would only exacerbate the alarming environmental situation in the region. There are fears that the missile and bomb attacks on Belgrade may damage nuclear storage facilities. Already, 5,000 tons of bombs have been dropped and more than 1,500 cruise missiles launched against Yugoslav territory, resulting in the pollution of the environment.

Ammunition containing depleted uranium is being used in the strikes against Yugoslavia. The use of similar ammunition by the United States military in previous armed conflicts (the Persian Gulf, and Bosnia and Herzegovina) has led to an increase in the incidence of cancer among the local populations, while 80,000 people have developed "Gulf War syndrome". The United Nations prohibited the use of such "barbaric shells" as long ago as 1996.

The pollutants in the Danube may cause the cooling systems of the Cernavodă (Romania) and Kozloduy (Bulgaria) nuclear power stations to malfunction. Oil pollution may result in an emergency situation with grave environmental consequences.

Yugoslavia has published lists of so-called "black spots", where damage could have extremely dangerous consequences. Nevertheless, chemical plants are being systematically bombed, despite the fact that their destruction represents a particular threat to the environment.

Fires at chemical plants are releasing into the atmosphere such persistent organic pollutants as dioxins and furans, which are highly carcinogenic and mutagenic. Substances harmful to human health, resulting from the fires burning at oil depots and refineries, have already reached Polish airspace and are approaching Finland. The anticyclone which is expected shortly may carry the poisonous mixture to the territory of Hungary, Greece and Italy. The level of atmospheric pollution caused by the substances resulting from the oil fires has already exceeded the permitted maximum levels by two to three times.

Spills and discharges from destroyed oil refineries and chemical and pharmaceuticals plants represent the greatest danger. The pollution of the Danube, and of the soil and groundwater, should also be counted among the negative effects. An oil slick has been observed on the Danube following the destruction of oil refineries in Serbian territory, particularly in the city of Novi Sad.

The continuation of the bombing is exacerbating the pollution of the atmosphere, and of soil, water bodies and groundwater, not only in the territory of Yugoslavia, but also in other European countries. As a result of the transborder transfer of the substances produced by the burning of oil depots, chemical plants and oil refineries, there is a real danger that the territory of other States, first and foremost Albania, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation, will be polluted by highly toxic substances (dioxins, furans, sulphate and nitrate compounds, etc.). The high persistence of these substances and their capacity to accumulate in the soil may lead to long-term contamination of the products of animal husbandry and agriculture.

As a result of the NATO bombing, four of Kosovo's seven oil depots have been destroyed, as well as two of Yugoslavia's two largest oil refineries, and the water supply systems in the cities of Novi Sad and Sombor have been damaged. The populations of these towns have been left without a centralized water supply, which may lead to mass outbreaks of infectious diseases. Oil depots in Niš and Lopatnica have again been struck.

There is a risk that pollutants resulting from the destruction of the oil depots and refineries will spread through the Danube and other rivers over large areas of Europe.

The barbaric destruction of key installations of the Belgrade water supply system is creating a real threat of epidemics of water-borne diseases.

An analysis of the data available to the State Committee of the Russian Federation has shown that the bombing is causing continuing chemical pollution of the atmosphere, soil, water bodies and groundwater. Fires are breaking out at the destroyed plants, and thick clouds of smoke cover the outskirts of the towns.

The Lower Danube is a source of drinking water for tens of millions of people, and its pollution is especially dangerous for an ecosystem such as the Danube delta and the birds, sturgeon and other species that inhabit it.

Dead fish killed by environmental pollution are already being found in Yugoslavia's rivers. The total damage resulting from the aggression is estimated at US$ 100 billion.

The natural way of life in wildlife areas is being disrupted. According to a report by the Ministry of the Environment of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, animal species not typical of that Republic have migrated to it from neighbouring Yugoslavia.

The use by NATO aircraft of ammunition containing graphite pellets is causing long-term environmental damage in the countries of the Balkan region. The destruction of electric power stations and transformer units is disrupting the functioning of life-support systems. The disabling of systems for treating municipal and industrial effluents may lead to the pollution of watercourses and the outbreak of epidemics, not only in Yugoslavia, but also in neighbouring States.

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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Possible modalities of a review by the Economic and Social Council in 2000 of progress within the United Nations system in promoting an integrated and coordinated implementation of major United Nations conferences and summits

Report of the Secretary-General

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Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1998/44 of 31 July 1998, agreed to consider conducting in the year 2000, as a possible contribution to the Millennium Assembly, without prejudice to the discussion of this issue by the General Assembly, a review by the Council of progress made within the United Nations system in the promotion of integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. It requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Council at its substantive session of 1999 on possible modalities of such a review.

2. In 1995, at a major debate on the coordinated follow-up and implementation of the major United Nations conferences of the 1990s, the Economic and Social Council emphasized that each conference had its thematic unity and that the conferences should be viewed as interlinked and contributing to an integrated framework of and a global partnership for development.[1] Since then, the Council has made it one of its main tasks to promote an integrated and coordinated follow-up to the outcomes of these conferences in particular within the United Nations system. It has provided yearly guidance on themes common to all conferences at its coordination, high-level and operational activities segments, and devoted special sessions or meetings to the coordinated follow-up to conferences in May 1998 and May 1999. In 2000, five years will have passed since the Council undertook this major endeavour, and the five-year reviews of several major conferences will have been completed. It would be important that the Council reflect on this effort, take stock of progress made and give guidance for future years, including for the lead-up to the 10-year reviews of conferences.

3. Such an overall review by the Economic and Social Council could also contribute to the Millennium Assembly. It may be recalled that the General Assembly, in resolution 53/202 of 17 December 1998, decided to designate the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly "The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations", and to convene, as an integral part of the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, a Millennium Summit of the United Nations for a limited number of days on dates to be decided by the General Assembly at its resumed fifty-third session. The intergovernmental process on the thematic contents and timing of the Millennium Assembly is ongoing, in particular through informal consultations of the plenary meeting of the General Assembly.[2] In preparation for the Millennium Assembly, a series of Regional Hearings are being held between May 1999 and September 1999[3] and civil society organizations are planning to hold a Millennium Forum in May 2000 on "The United Nations for the Twenty-first Century". The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) is also conducting a dialogue, initiated at a retreat in April 1999, on the main challenges facing the United Nations system in the next decade and the responses of the system.

4. Section I outlines the proposal of the Secretariat regarding the scope and contents of the review of the Council, and section II describes possible modalities for this review.

I. Review by the Economic and Social Council of progress on common and cross-cutting themes emerging from conferences, including coordination within the United Nations system

5. In view of the role of the Economic and Social Council in integrating and coordinating the follow-up to global conferences, it is proposed that the Council, in 2000, conduct an overall review of progress on common and cross-cutting themes emerging from conferences.[4] The Council could examine progress achieved with regard to a number of broad goals that cut across all United Nations conferences. It may be recalled that in 1995, the Secretary-General identified four such broad cross-cutting goals relating to (a) the enabling environment; (b) basic social services for all: primary health care, nutrition, education, safe water and sanitation, population and shelter; (c) access to sustainable livelihoods, full employment and family incomes; and (d) environment and natural resources.[5] In its agreed conclusions 1995/1, the Council agreed to review cross-cutting themes common to conferences at its coordination segment each year, taking the themes identified by the Secretary-General into account.[6]

6. The Economic and Social Council could review progress in achieving these four broad cross-cutting goals, taking into account the gender dimension and the impact on Africa and countries in special categories. To do so, the Council could draw from the work conducted for the five-year reviews of the conferences[7] and additional preparatory work. To make it more feasible for the Council to address these cross-cutting themes, the key common goals and commitment undertaken under the four major broad topics could be extracted, and the Council could then review these in an overall context.

7. One aspect of this review would be to examine the extent to which the United Nations system's efforts to promote a coherent, coordinated and integrate approach to the implementation and follow-up to conferences have worked and to consider the steps that can be taken to achieve further improvements. Drawing extensively from the preparatory work and outcomes of the five-year reviews of conferences, the Economic and Social Council could, in particular, review how far the United Nations system has progressed in implementing the guidance of the Council on conference follow-up (in particular its agreed conclusions 1995/1 on the coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system and implementation of the results of the major international conferences organized by the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and its subsequent resolutions and decisions on that topic). The Council could thus guide further efforts by the United Nations system to integrate and coordinate its activities related to conferences and to address the major challenges that will affect the achievement of conference goals in the coming years.

8. Beyond this, the Economic and Social Council would conduct an overall review of how countries and the international community at large have pursued an integrated approach to implementing the goals emanating from global conferences. This would be consistent with the role that the Council has played since 1995 in examining cross-cutting conference themes. Indeed, pursuant to its decision in 1995, the Council has made a major contribution to the follow-up to conferences by reviewing themes common to major conferences and summits. It conducted such reviews, at its coordination segments (on poverty eradication, gender mainstreaming, African development and human rights) as well as at its high-level segments (on fostering an enabling environment for development; market access; and the role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women).

II. Proposed modalities for the review

A. Possible modalities for convening the review

9. It is proposed that the Economic and Social Council conduct its review during its substantive session of 2000, in July 2000. The review would thus be completed in time for the Millennium Assembly, and benefit from the outcomes of the reviews of the Fourth World Conference on Women (special session of the General Assembly, 5–9 June 2000) and of the World Summit for Social Development (special session of the General Assembly, Geneva, 26–30 June 2000).

10. The review of the Economic and Social Council could be held either at its high-level segment (option 1) or at its coordination segment (option 2). Regardless of the option chosen by the Council, panels could be held from January through May 2000 to examine selected cross-cutting themes, for which early consultations and preparation would be important.

Option 1

11. An overall review of progress on cross-cutting conference themes could most suitably be conducted at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in 2000. The one-day policy dialogue with the heads of financial and trade institutions could thus contribute to the review. The outcome, which would be in the form of agreed conclusions of a ministerial declaration, would also be an important input to the Millennium Assembly.

Option 2

12. Alternatively, the Economic and Social Council could devote its coordination segment of July 2000 to this review. Consistent with the function of this segment to review the coordination of the United Nations system's activities in relation to conferences in particular, this would increase the focus of the review of United Nations system activities. In that case, the Council's review could also include Hearings with members of the ACC. Panels of executive heads of United Nations system organizations could be held with the Council to discuss how the system has integrated its efforts to support conference implementation and follow-up. The outcome of the review would be in the form of agreed conclusions, which could also contribute to the preparations for the Millennium Assembly.

B. Contribution of civil society

13. The council could encourage the holding of a separate meeting or forum of civil society in advance of the session of the Economic and Social Council, to make a substantive input into the review. The Council, once it decides on the scope of its review, could invite non-governmental organizations to make proposals on how they can best contribute to it.

C. Possible role of the functional and regional commissions

14. The Economic and Social Council could consider inviting the functional and regional commissions to contribute to its examination, by holding a debate on the review and conveying its outcome through a Chairman's summary.

D. Other aspects

Documentation

15. The Secretary-General would prepare a report to support the review of the Economic and Social Council, in collaboration with the United Nations system organizations. ACC and its subsidiary machinery could be invited to contribute to the report. It may be noted that the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) has started to undertake work on reviewing the system's efforts at coordination of conference follow-up at the country level.

Financing preparations and participation

16. Consideration could be given to creating a trust fund to help to finance preparatory panels and events as proposed above, as well as to support the participation of developing countries. This would be important to ensure the representation of officials from the relevant ministries in developing countries.

III. Conclusion

17. Given that the Economic and Social Council has undertaken reviews of specific cross-cutting themes over the past five years, it would appear timely for the Council to undertake, at its high-level segment in the year 2000, an overall review of progress on common and cross-cutting themes emerging from conferences. Since 1995, the Council has made considerable progress in effectively guiding and coordinating system-wide efforts related to conference goals. There is now a solid basis and effective avenues for better integrating efforts in these areas at national, regional, headquarters and intergovernmental levels. The Council can continue to build on these achievements at its regular sessions. It would now appear most timely for the Council to review effective progress with respect to major themes common to all conferences. This would enable the Council to move to an increasingly substantive phase of its effort to integrate the implementation of major conferences and summits within the United Nations system.

18. It would be important that the Economic and Social Council, at the start of the new millennium, carry out a broad-ranging review of conference implementation and that it thus make a special contribution to the Millennium Assembly. The Council is therefore invited to consider the undertaking of such a review in the year 2000 and to decide on the scope and content of the review and the modalities for concluding it.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/50/3/Rev.1), chap. III, para. 22, agreed conclusions 1995/1, second paragraph.

[2] It may be noted that, based on consultations held thus far, the Secretary-General has proposed the following as the overall theme and the sub-topics of the Millennium Summit:

Overall theme: The United Nations in the twenty-first century.

Subtopics:
(a) Peace and security including disarmament;
(b) Development, including poverty eradication;
(c) Human rights;
(d) Strengthening the United Nations.

(See the report of the Secretary-General on the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations: thematic framework for the Millennium Summit (A/53/948), dated 10 May 1999. See also the note by the Secretariat on the Millennium Assembly and Millennium Summit of the United Nations (A/53/CRP.1)).

[3] The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Hearings took place on 23 and 24 May 1999. Other Hearings are scheduled to take place at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (24 and 25 June 1999) and at the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (7 and 8 July 1999, in Geneva). Hearings will also be held from August to September 1999 in the regions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

[4] The same proposal was put forward in the 1998 report of the Secretary-General on the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits (E/1998/19).

[5] These broad categories could be broken down into more specific cross-cutting themes, as follows:

(a) The enabling environment:

(i) A stable macroeconomic policy framework conducive to development;

(ii) External debt and finance for development;

(iii) International trade and commodities;

(iv) Science and technology;

(v) Participation, democracy, human rights, accountability and partnership with major groups and non-governmental organizations;

(vi) Promoting social integration;

(b) Basic social services for all: primary health care, nutrition, education, safe water and sanitation, population and shelter;

(c) Access to sustainable livelihoods, full employment and family incomes:

(i) Eradication of poverty and hunger;

(ii) Access to productive occupational opportunities, full employment and family incomes;

(d) Environment and natural resources.

It was also noted that a number of issues, such as gender equality, equity and empowerment of women, poverty eradication, participation and human rights, and the problems of Africa and special categories of countries cut across all the themes. (See report of the Secretary-General on the coordinated follow-up to major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields (E/1995/86), para. 57.

[6] The Economic and Social Council, in its agreed conclusions 1995/1, also envisioned contributing to an overall review of the implementation of the programme of action of a United Nations conference at its coordination segment.

[7] Review dates: review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was carried out in 1997, and of the World Conference on Human Rights in 1998; the review of the International Conference on Population and Development will be carried out in 1999. Reviews of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women are to be carried out in June 2000.